SEBRING
MULTIMODAL LOGISTICS CENTER

SEF RIGHT OF WAYS RULES, TRAFFIC PATTERNS AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFE SKIES & SAFE PILOTS

THIS SAFETY ADVISOR COVERS THE "RULES OF THE ROAD" AT SEF

COMMUNICATION

VFR charts depict towered airports in blue, and non-towered airports are shown in magenta. The basic difference between operating at a tower-controlled airport and one without an operating control tower is the difference between instructions and advisories. Tower controllers issue taxi, departure, and arrival instructions for pilots to follow on specific ATC frequencies. At non-towered airports, you will hear advisories on a CTAF, but the responsibility for collision avoidance, sequencing, and knowing the local procedures lies solely with the pilot.

~ CTAF SAFETY TIP

ALL AIRCRAFT SHOULD MONITOR THE CTAF WHEN OPERATING IN THE VICINITY OF NON-TOWERED AIRPORTS.

The CTAF frequency can be found on sectional charts, in the AF/D, AOPA's Airport Directory, instrument approach charts, or other airport directories.

Frequencies do change, so use current references. Non-towered airports without a flight service station (FSS) generally will have a unicom frequency. These are usually staffed by fixed-base operation (FBO) employees who provide airport information. The unicom is usually the CTAF.

Note: Unicom operators are not required to communicate with pilots, and if they do, there are no standards for the information conveyed.

- Some airports have part-time control towers. When the tower is closed, usually at night, non-towered operating procedures apply. The tower frequency usually becomes the CTAF when the tower is closed.
- Other airports have part-time FSSs that advise pilots of the winds, weather, and known traffic. Usually the FSS advisory frequency will become the CTAF when the FSS is closed.

Non-towered communication is not always easy, especially in metropolitan areas where there never seem to be enough frequencies to go around. It's not unusual for several airports within radio range to share the same CTAF. Make sure to state the airport name at the beginning and end of each transmission for the sake of both clarity and safety. "Lake Elmo traffic, Warrior Five Four Charlie entering downwind Runway Three-Two, Lake Elmo."

~ CTAF SAFETY TIP

THE CTAF SHOULD BE USED FOR TWO REASONS ONLY:
COLLISION AVOIDANCE
AIRPORT ADVISORY

Listening to a busy CTAF for only a few minutes will reveal too many long-winded conversationalists. Don't use this vital collision-avoidance resource for aircraft or lunch scheduling, formation flying, saying hello to friends on the ground, discussing sports, or expressing your displeasure at the pilot who just pulled out on the runway while you were on short final.

COMMUNICATION TIP

LISTEN BEFORE YOU SPEAK. WHEN TWO AIRCRAFT TRANSMIT AT THE SAME TIME, THE FREQUENCY IS BLOCKED, RESULTING IN A LOUD SQUEAL. PLUS, YOU CAN GAIN VALUABLE INFORMATION FROM LISTENING TO OTHER PILOTS' RADIO CALLS.

COMMUNICATION SAFETY TIP

WE RECOMMEND THAT PILOTS OF NON-RADIO AIRCRAFT USE A HAND-HELD TRANSCEIVER AT BUSY NON-TOWERED AIRPORTS. THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL PIECE OF SAFETY EQUIPMENT.

There are two golden rules for non-towered airport communication:

1. Be Specific

- When you transmit, begin by stating the name of the airport, followed by the model of your aircraft (Skyhawk, Cherokee, Bonanza, etc.) and the last three alphanumerics of the aircraft N number.
- It's common practice for pilots of homebuilt and other aircraft certificated in the experimental category to identify their airplanes as "experimental." There is a tremendous performance differential between a Lancair and a Baby Ace. Likewise, an RV-4 silhouette is altogether different from an Acro Sport. In order to aid identification and predict performance, ASF recommends that all traffic-pattern announcements include the aircraft type.

2. Be Brief

- It's more important for pilots to know what kind of airplane you're flying than to know your complete call sign. Knowing the model of airplane will help other pilots plan their pattern flight relative to you. The abbreviated version of your call sign takes up less of valuable air time. It's also easier for other pilots to remember a short call sign if they need to request an update on your position.
- Prevent confusion by using your full call sign when you hear another aircraft with a similar call sign.

COMMUNICATION TIP

MANY PILOTS WRAP UP THEIR INITIAL POSITION ANNOUNCEMENTS WITH A REQUEST: "TRAFFIC IN THE AREA,PLEASE ADVISE." DON'T DO THIS. THE PHRASE IS REDUNDANT (WE'RE ALL SUPPOSED TO BE LISTENING AND SELF ANNOUNCING), AND IT CONTRIBUTES TO FREQUENCY CONGESTION. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO THE AIM, IT'S "NOT A RECOGNIZED SELF-ANNOUNCE POSITION AND/OR INTENTION PHRASE, AND SHOULD NOT BE USED UNDER ANY CONDITION."

COLLISION AVOIDANCE

At non-towered fields, it's possible that pilots in non-radio aircraft are practicing landings, IFR students and their instructors are practicing instrument approaches, helicopter pilots are perfecting their auto-rotation skills, or sailplanes are floating overhead. Not all pilots in the area are announcing their positions and intentions on the CTAF, or even looking out the window!

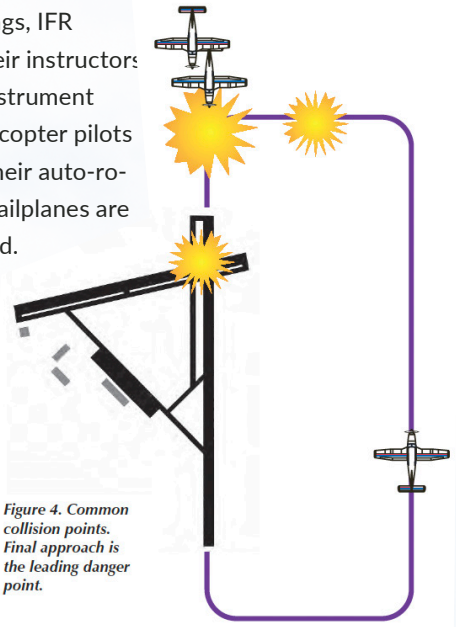
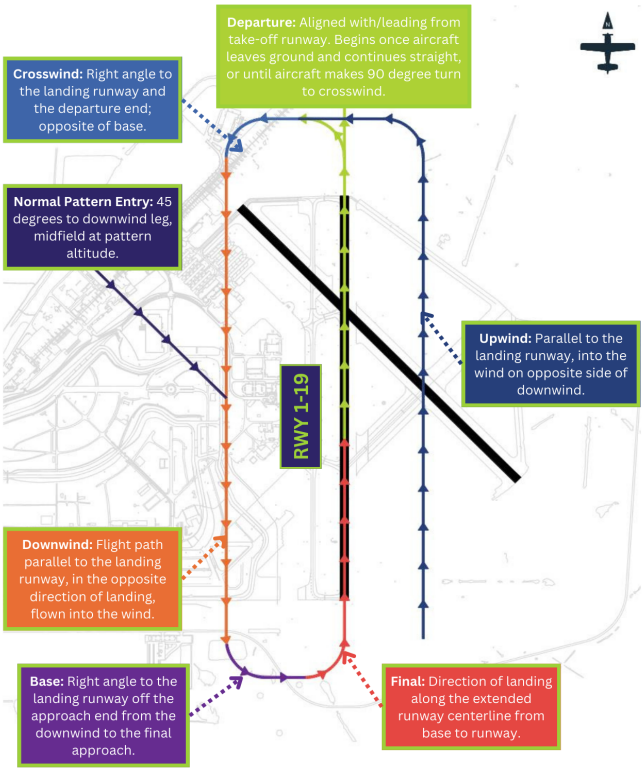


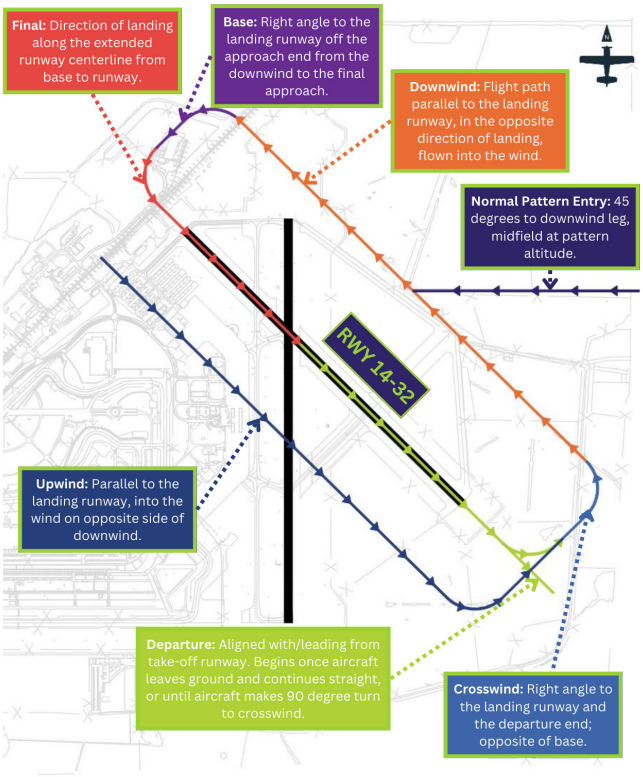
Figure 4. Common collision points. Final approach is the leading danger point.

RUNWAY TRAFFIC PATTERNS

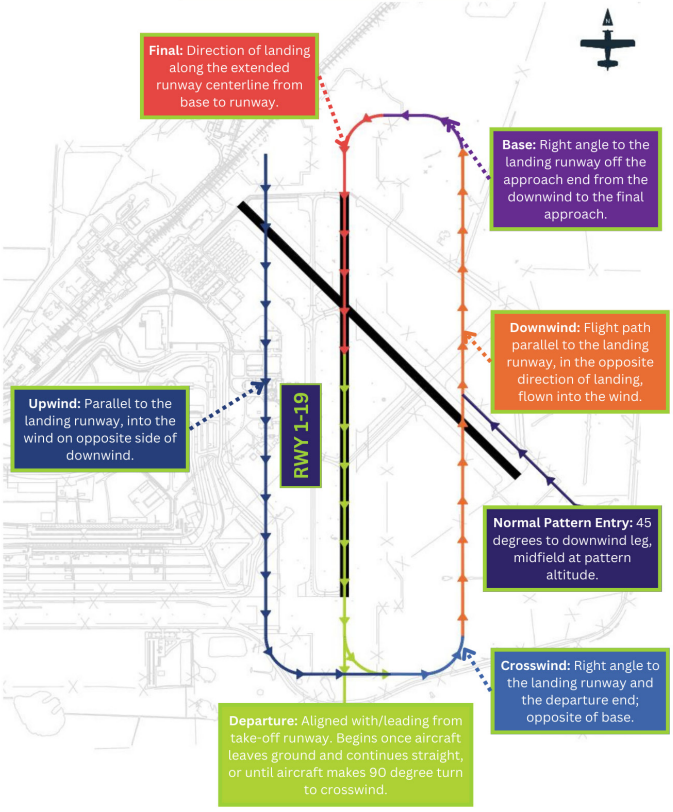
RUNWAY 01 TRAFFIC PATTERN



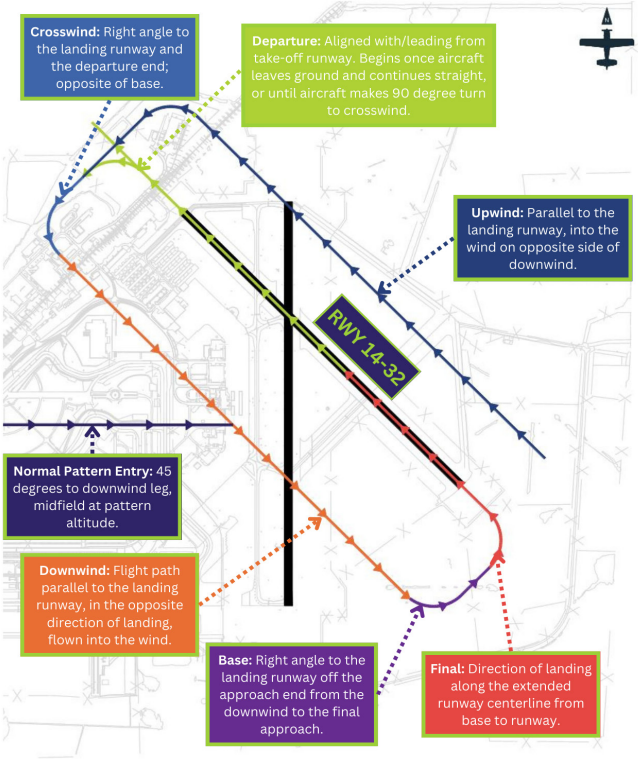
RUNWAY 14 TRAFFIC PATTERN



RUNWAY 19 TRAFFIC PATTERN



RUNWAY 32 TRAFFIC PATTERN



SAFETY & COURTESY TIPS

AOPA AIR SAFETY FOUNDATION (ASF).

ASF does NOT recommend the practice of taking position on the runway and holding at non-towered airports to wait for other traffic to clear. There may be a delay, and you are in an extremely vulnerable position with no way of seeing traffic behind you

COMMUNICATION SAFETY TIP

FOR GREATER CLARITY, SOME PILOTS INCLUDE THE DIRECTION OF TRAFFIC (E.G., LEFT OR RIGHT) IN THEIR TRAFFIC PATTERN ANNOUNCEMENTS. FREDERICK TRAFFIC, CESSNA EIGHT-ONE TANGO FOXTROT, TURNING RIGHT DOWNWIND, RUNWAY FIVE, FULL STOP, FREDERICK.

TURNING THE CORNERS

Announcements made just before "turning the corners" give other pilots in the pattern a definite place to look for traffic. Banking airplanes are easier for other aircraft at the same altitude to spot. High-wing aircraft should always "pick up" a wing and look before turning.

USING INSTRUMENT APPROACH CHARTS

ASF recommends using instrument approach charts if they are available for the airports you are using. With these useful charts, you'll:

- Have an airport diagram and CTAF frequency.
- Know where to expect inbound IFR aircraft.
- Know what ATC frequencies they will be monitoring.
- Know the location of significant obstacles.

If you can't afford a set of instrument approach charts, consider acquiring an airport information guide or make a sketch of the airport diagram and other pertinent information. AOPA members may download and print free instrument approach procedure (IAP) charts from the AOPA Airport Directory Online, www.aopa.org/members/airports.

LANDING LIGHTS

USE LANDING LIGHTS WITHIN 10 MILES OF THE AIRPORT. PUT IT ON YOUR TAKEOFF AND DESCENT CHECKLISTS—IT IS THE MARK OF A PROFESSIONAL.

STERILE COCKPIT

The airlines use the "sterile cockpit" concept to minimize distractions by restricting conversation to operationally pertinent topics. Brief your passengers or copilot that, within 10 miles of the airport, either inbound or outbound, they should not disturb you other than to point out traffic or significant aircraft related items. It is not a time to answer general questions about the aircraft or sightseeing.

FINAL APPROACH

Stay alert all the way to the hangar. Final approach is the place where pilots narrow their focus to concentrate on landing. They "lock on" to the touchdown zone and stop scanning for traffic. This may be why most midair collisions occur on final approach to non-towered airports. Concentrating too much on landing may also contribute to landing with the gear up.

COLLISION

AN AIRCRAFT ON A COLLISION COURSE WILL HAVE NO APPARENT MOVEMENT RELATIVE TO YOU, AND THE TARGET WILL "BLOSSOM" JUST A FEW SECONDS BEFORE IMPACT (SEE FIGURE 5). SURVIVORS OF MIDAIR COLLISIONS FREQUENTLY HAVE NO RECOLLECTION OF SEEING THE OTHER AIRCRAFT. IN ADDITION, IT'S EASY TO LOSE A TARGET IN THE GROUND CLUTTER—BE AT PATTERN ALTITUDE BEFORE ENTERING THE PATTERN.

BE VIGILANT.

REMEMBER TO SCAN FOR TRAFFIC WHILE TALKING ON THE RADIO.

CLIMBING SAFELY

The higher the angle of climb, the less visibility you'll have over the nose. Clear the area ahead by lowering the nose occasionally and/or turning slightly side-to-side as you climb.

SLOWER AIRCRAFT SHOULD FLY A TIGHTER TRAFFIC PATTERN

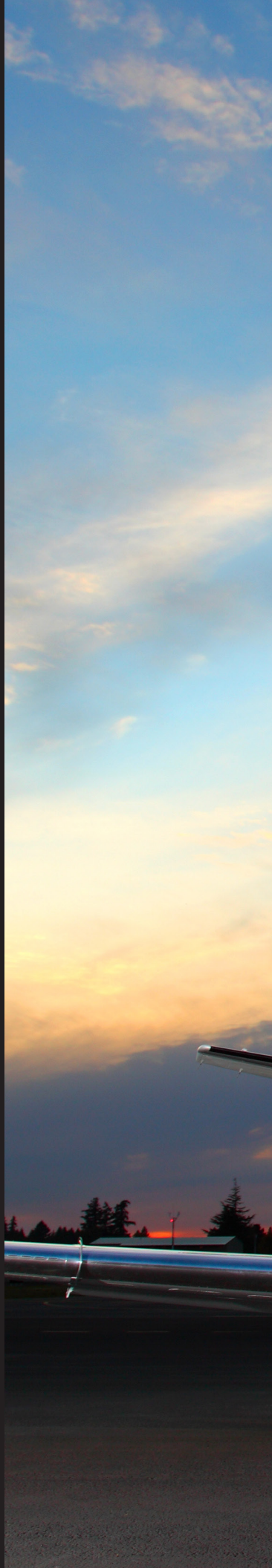
Practice until you are comfortable making up to 30-degree banks for base and final. Too close leads to a potential overshoot or a stall from an oversteep turn. Too wide leads to a greater noise footprint and a strung-out final, not a good place to be if the engine quits.

TAKE-OFF COURTESY

If there are several aircraft waiting to take off, announce that you are extending downwind to let traffic depart. "Findlay traffic, Katana Five-Four Foxtrot, extending downwind Runway Two-One to allow departures, Findlay."

APPROACH COURTESY

If another aircraft is on a straight-in instrument approach in visual conditions and it will not greatly inconvenience you, consider extending your downwind to follow the aircraft. Be sure to announce your intentions.



SAFETY TIP FOR VFR INSTRUCTIONS

Instrument flight instructors should exercise particular vigilance during VFR conditions, when it is easy to get distracted by the student's activities. Your primary responsibility is to see and avoid.

SAFETY TIP IN HEAVY VFR TRAFFIC

If there is heavy VFR traffic and you're on an instrument approach to other than the active runway, break off the approach before a conflict develops and enter normal traffic. Announce your intentions on the CTAF.

MONITORING SKYDIVING OPERATIONS

Ask ATC for the coordination frequency for skydiving operations and monitor that frequency when you're in the area. This can be a more reliable way of hearing about jump operations than monitoring the CTAF.

PRO SAFETY TIP

Think like an air traffic controller when you fly. Controllers try to maintain an orderly, efficient flow of traffic, meaning you'll slow down or extend to accommodate the traffic ahead or alter your normal pattern slightly to conform to the traffic situation.

RIGHT OF WAY

FAR 91.113 (B)-(G)— RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES: EXCEPT WATER OPERATIONS

(b) General. When weather conditions permit, regardless of whether an operation is conducted under instrument flight rules or visual flight rules, vigilance shall be maintained by each person operating an aircraft so as to see and avoid other aircraft. When a rule of this section gives another aircraft the right-of-way, the pilot shall give way to that aircraft and may not pass over, under, or ahead of it unless well clear.

(c) In distress. An aircraft in distress has the right-of-way over all other air traffic.

(d) Converging. When aircraft of the same category are converging at approximately the same altitude (except head-on, or nearly so), the aircraft to the other's right has the right-of-way. If the aircraft are of different categories—

(1) A balloon has the right-of-way over any other category of aircraft;

(2) A glider has the right-of-way over an airship, powered parachute, weight-shift-control aircraft, airplane, or rotorcraft.

(3) An airship has the right-of-way over a powered parachute, weight-shift-control aircraft, airplane or rotorcraft. However, an aircraft towing or refueling other aircraft has the right-of-way over all other engine-driven aircraft.

(e) Approaching head-on. When aircraft are approaching each other head-on, or nearly so, each pilot of each aircraft shall alter course to the right.

(f) Overtaking. Each aircraft that is being overtaken has the right-of-way and each pilot of an overtaking aircraft shall alter course to the right to pass well clear.

(g) Landing. Aircraft, while on final approach to land or while landing, have the right-of-way over other aircraft in flight or operating on the surface, except that they shall not take advantage of this rule to force an aircraft off the runway surface which has already landed and is attempting to make way for an aircraft on final approach. When two or more aircraft are approaching an airport for the purpose of landing, the aircraft at the lower altitude has the right-of-way, but it shall not take advantage of this rule to cut in front of another which is on final approach to land or to overtake that aircraft.

FAR 91.126 (B)

(b) Direction of turns. When approaching to land at an airport without an operating control tower in Class G airspace—

(1) Each pilot of an airplane must make all turns of that airplane to the left, unless the airport displays approved light signals or visual markings indicating that turns should be made to the right, in which case the pilot must make all turns to the right; and

(2) Each pilot of a helicopter or a powered parachute must avoid the flow of fixed-wing aircraft.

FAR 91.127 (B)

(b) Departures. Each pilot of an aircraft must comply with any traffic patterns established for that airport in part 93 of this chapter. airsafe

For more information and to find out about how you can be a part of our dynamic Sebring environment, contact us today.

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